

(171)

SELECTIONS

FROM THE

VERNACULAR NEWSPAPERS

PUBLISHED IN THE

PUNJAB, NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES, OUDH, AND
CENTRAL PROVINCES,

Received up to 22nd April, 1871.

POLITICAL (DOMESTIC).

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Rohilkhand Akhbār*, of the 8th April, finds fault with the way in which incomes are assessed for the purpose of taxation. Last year the assessment was made with such severity and injustice that the people of the whole of British India were grievously distressed, so much so that complaints and appeals against the extortions then practised are to the present day before the courts in each district. These grievances are due to the malevolence and apathy of the Native gentlemen who are entrusted with the task of assessing, and who either take no pains in ascertaining the actual incomes or profits of the persons to be assessed, or base their estimates on the statements of the neighbours of the latter, which are often biased by feelings of envy and jealousy. The result is that the profits are valued at double and even treble the actual amount, and thus it happens that the gentlemen whom Government selects as assessors in hopes of benefitting by their local experience, only prove instruments of oppression. The writer is of opinion that if justice were exercised in assessment, even the exorbitant rate of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. would not have been so loudly complained of by the people. It is manifest that, besides the income from salaries, all other kinds of income cannot generally be ascertained with exactness; and that there are many trades and professions the profits of which cannot be known even to those who follow them without consulting the accounts. It may, therefore, be imagined what the result

will be if mere outward appearances or the statements of other persons are allowed to weigh in fixing the amount of a man's profits.

The writer invites the attention of Government to the matter, and asks it to adopt some system of assessing incomes, in order that the evils above pointed out may be put a stop to. In his opinion the best plan will be to determine men's incomes by their own statements made on oath. As a similar system is pursued in England, he sees no reason why it should not be adopted in India.

Another correspondent of the same paper comments upon the new taxes which the Government of India contemplates levying. The people of India had scarcely got rid of the income-tax, when, to crown their distress, news came of the approach of new taxes, a license-tax on certain professions, a tax on lands in particular provinces, and the house-tax. Unlike the past years, in which, through a mismanagement of the finances, deficits had come to exist, the happy arrangements and the reforms introduced by Lord Mayo have now caused a decided increase in the revenue, and a reduction in the expenditure, and it was therefore hoped that Government would relieve the people from the income-tax, but all in vain. While the old burden still continues, we are to be saddled with new levies. It surprises us to find that, while the Viceroy seems disinclined to impose fresh taxes, the Members of the Council display their ingenuity in devising new schemes of taxation, and thereby proving their zeal in the cause of Government.

The writer goes on to consider the impropriety of imposing the taxes in question, and the evils attendant on them. And first with regard to the tax on professions. It is remarked that the generality of the workmen and manufacturers in India are so poor as scarcely to be able to maintain themselves: unlike England, where these persons are in very affluent circumstances, and drive an extensive trade, so that goods worth hundreds of thousands of rupees can be had at one time from the same shop. In India the case is quite otherwise; artisans

and manufacturers have scarcely any things ready for sale and only work for wages. Under these circumstances, it may be imagined how hard the tax will fall on them. It will reduce them to the greatest distress, and ultimately lead them to give up their trades, which will reduce the already small number of these persons in this country, much to the disadvantage and detriment of the whole people.

The tax on houses will also produce very bad consequences. The value of houses will be considerably reduced, and rich men, who now live in spacious mansions, and have generally spare houses in their possession, which they let to poor people on a small rent, will not only think it their best policy to dispose of the latter, so as to escape the tax, but will content themselves with living in smaller habitations, from which there is a likelihood of their incurring bodily diseases. The case of the poorer classes will be worse still. They will have to part with the houses handed down to them by their ancestors, and quit cities and towns to take up their abode in villages, the result of which will be that the former will dwindle into insignificance.

In conclusion, the writer is at a loss to make out what need there is of imposing the new taxes. It is well known what loud complaints were preferred against the income-tax, and with what difficulty the people have been relieved from it to some extent. The new taxes will only redouble their distress: because, while the income-tax left all persons with incomes up to Rs. 500 unaffected, the operation of the new taxes will extend to the poorest classes; thus, the new taxes will more than counterbalance the reduction of 2½ per cent. now effected in the rate of the income-tax. On these grounds, the writer advises Government to give up all thoughts of introducing the new taxes.

Opinions of the Native Press on the proposal of the Director-General of Post-offices to issue a new kind of embossed envelopes, explained in his Circular issued in March last:—

The *Quadrant*, of the 11th April, in reviewing the above proposal, thinks it worth while to consider that portion of

it where the Director-General refers to the practice of writing the addresses on both sides of envelopes, before giving its opinion on the general question. It is remarked that the public are well aware of the impropriety of the practice, and, as a rule, write the address on one side only, leaving the other side blank. The editor, however, thinks it likely that this rule is adhered to only by the people of towns and villages where the rays of civilization have spread, and that the inhabitants of the country, who have not yet emerged from a state of barbarism, might, as stated by the Director-General, be in the habit of doing otherwise.

Assuming that to be a fact, the editor approves of the scheme embodied in paras. 3 and 4 of the circular, and congratulates the public on the advantage it will bring them in getting good envelopes for the value of the stamps without any additional charge. In case of bearing letters, he would impress on the public the necessity of using envelopes of the size proposed by the Director-General, and of attending to the other points mentioned in the circular.

In conclusion, the editor renders his thanks to the Director-General for the honour he has done to the Native Press in asking its opinion on the proposal, and remarks that if that officer takes the same interest in other matters connected with the Postal Department, and, from time to time, consults the public as he has done in the present instance, all defects and imperfections in the post-office will be removed.

The *Shola-i-Tūr*, of the same date, is of opinion that the proposed envelopes will soon gain a wide currency on account of being available for a value equal to the stamps borne by them, but remarks that the usefulness of the proposal will be limited, inasmuch as it will affect paid letters only; bearing letters will still be characterized by the defects pointed out by the Director-General, and as these bear a large proportion to paid ones, on account of being more sure of arrival at their destinations, the editor is of opinion that a special kind of envelope should be introduced for them also, or else orders be

issued directing that all bearing covers of less than the fixed size will be liable to an additional postage, say, in the proportion of one-half.

The *Koh-i-Nūr*, of the 15th April, noticing the same proposal, quotes with approval an article from *Indian Public Opinion*, pointing out the bad effects of abolishing half-anna stamps.

Although the editor is opposed to doing away with separate half-anna stamps, he is of opinion that the envelopes proposed by the Director-General may be introduced experimentally.

The *Panjābī Akhbār*, of the same date, remarks that the plan will scarcely do any good, and is of opinion that the mistakes pointed out in the circular, such as the practice of writing on both sides of covers, &c., could be as well rectified by issuing general directions as by the introduction of special envelopes.

The *Jalwa-i-Tūr*, of the 16th April, approves of the scheme, but suggests that envelopes of a similar kind to those proposed by the Director-General should be introduced for bearing letters, and sold cheaply. Unless this suggestion is adopted, the defects which the Director-General is anxious to remove will continue to exist.

In connection with this subject, the editor invites the attention of the Director-General to another practice which is injurious to editors of newspapers. Such of the newspapers as happen to be refused by the addressees are sent by postmasters to the Director-General's office, whence they are returned to the editors after a long time. This practice causes loss to editors, and the *Jalwa-i-Tūr* asks that such newspapers be returned to the editors by postmasters direct.

The *Qadh Akhbār*, of the 11th April, gives an account of the fair held at *Lodheshwar Mahādev* in February last. The following two points are stated as worthy of being taken notice of by Government:—

(1) By an arbitration award, dated the Fasil year 1865, as well as other documents which the writer quotes, it was decided that the income of the temple of the Mahadev should be divided—half and half—between the Gosain and Panda, the managers of the temple, after paying for the maintenance of the class of mendicants called Nagas and the daily alms distributed in the shape of food to travellers. This rule is now no longer adhered to, and the income is lavished on dancers and singers, which is said to be one reason why the fair was not as largely attended by pilgrims this year as it used to be. As the award by which it was determined that the income was to be spent in the distribution of alms was adjudged in the time of the Native Government of Oudh, it is a question whether the English Government, and the nobles in whose estate the temple lies, cannot with propriety interfere in the management of the income.

(2) The lands of the groves planted in the suburbs of the place, which were expressly intended to serve as halting-places for pilgrims to shelter them from the sun, have been cultivated and sown, which is a source of much inconvenience to pilgrims. The writer thinks that, in accordance with Section 308, Act XXV. of 1861, written orders should be issued against those concerned, prohibiting the cultivation of the lands.

The *Lawrence Gazette*, of the 14th April, publishes an essay on extravagance at marriages, read at a meeting of the Literary Society at Ghazipore. The writer begins with defining extravagance as signifying not only such expenditure as is beyond one's means, but also one which, though it may not exceed the means of any particular individual, may yet set a bad example to others. He then goes on to contrast the expensive though useless matrimonial rites and ceremonies obtaining among the Hindus with the simpler customs peculiar to the Mahomedans, and still more so to the Christians. The last-mentioned people are praised for having adopted the simplest mode of celebrating marriages. The union depends on the choice of the parties, and, after mutual consent has been obtained, the mar-

riage is celebrated, without any such ceremonies as the practice of sending the nuptial gifts (*tilak*) to the bridegroom before marriage, or the assignment of a dower to the bride by her parents.

Among the Musalmans, too, with the exception of the marriage-portion settled on the wife by the husband before marriage, which is meant to impose special obligations on the latter, and to make him adhere to the marriage-contract through fear of his having to pay the promised portion for the maintenance of his wife in case of a divorce, no other kind of nuptial gifts are enjoined; and though the Mahomedans have caught the infection from the Hindús of the North-Western Provinces and Behar of adopting shows and displays in marriages, no such extravagance is practised by them in the celebration of marriages as is fashionable among Hindús. The same is true of the Bengalís, who are least remarkable for extravagance at marriages.

The writer then goes on to mention the preliminary rites and ceremonies connected with marriages among the upper and middle classes of the Hindús. He begins with stating how the birth of a daughter brings grief to the parents on consideration of the vast expenditure that will have to be incurred in her marriage; how for fear of this expenditure the Rajpúts have adopted the practice of infanticide; how the choice of a husband for their daughters is treated by Hindús as a matter of trifling importance, being left to Barbers and Brahmans; how the horoscopes of the proposed bride and bridegroom are compared and the coincidence of special points in the two seals the marriage-contract; and how the uniting of a girl and an adult in marriage on this principle results in the selection of bad wives or husbands. The writer advises his countrymen not to place too much faith on horoscopes, and to consider if the English system of solemnizing the marriage, which is the least encumbered with extravagant ceremonies, is not the best model for adoption.

He proceeds to enumerate the different ceremonies observed by the parents of both parties after the espousals, and dwells on the evil consequences attendant on the extravagance practised in the ceremonies, remarking that the abuse will not be thoroughly put a stop to until civilization has fully spread among the people. He calls upon the educated classes to exert themselves in eradicating the abuse, and follow the examples of Munshi Pyare Lal, and the late Sir Raja Deo Narayan Singh in bringing about the desired reform.

The *Nur-ul-Absar*, of the 15th April, comments on the desirability of publishing quarterly or half-yearly accounts of the income and expenditure of the municipal committees in the North-Western Provinces. Accounts of the municipal committees of the Panjab and Oudh are often published in the newspapers of those provinces, and it would not be without advantage, in the writer's opinion, if similar accounts were published of the municipal committees in the North-Western Provinces.

The same paper reports that it has occurred to Wajid Ali Shah, the ex-Nawab of Oudh, that he has a claim on Government for forty lakhs of rupees; and asserts that it is the Nawab's intention to sue for the amount, and, if necessary, even to make an appeal to Parliament. The writer remarks that if the claim is preferred it will alarm Lord Mayo, who is already much concerned at the embarrassed state of the Indian finances. He advises the Nawab, if the legal limitation term be not soon to expire, to postpone his suit for the present, and advance the claim at a time when the State treasury is better replenished.

The *Urdú Delhi Gazette*, of the same date, learns from a correspondent's letter dated 10th April, that on Saturday last another quarrel took place at Bareilly. It is stated that on Friday some Hindús presented themselves before the Magistrate to report the names of the Musalmans who had taken part in the late struggle. The result was that several Musal-

mans were arrested. The relations of the latter on hearing of this attacked the Hindús in a body on Sunday. One man was killed and several were wounded.

The *Rohilkhund Akhbár*, of the same date, notices the fair recently held at Hardwar. It is remarked that the number of pilgrims who attended the fair was considerable, and that a tax of one anna per head was levied from them. The editor regrets that Government has not yet deigned to order the abolition of the tax on religious fairs, of which people have long been expecting to hear.

The *Urdu Akhbár*, of the 16th April, suggests certain reforms in connection with the city of Delhi, classified under the following eight heads:—

(1) The filth collected by sweepers in the space between the two *Idgáhs* towards the west of the exterior of the city produces deadly effluvia which corrupt the air of the city. In the writer's opinion, it might be heaped in gardens or thrown in the sands at the distance of a mile or a half from the Delhi Gate, or, which is the best plan, thrown into the river, as is done in Calcutta. So also, the filth of each *mohalla*, now generally heaped by sweepers near the roadside, though only for a short time, should be collected in pits dug in some retired place in the *mohallas*.

(2) Streets not frequented by the district authorities are scantily watered, which causes much harm, especially in the hot season. A little strictness on the part of the authorities will set things to right.

(3) The covered drains in front of the shops in the markets should be cleaned every month.

(4) The sellers of smoking-tobacco mix carbonate of soda and the drug called *dántiyá* with it for the sake of gain, and in order to increase the weight of the tobacco. The result is, that thousands of persons who use this tobacco incur fever and consumption, and often become blind. The attention of Government ought to be drawn to the abuse.

(5) False and adulterated medicines are sold at almost all druggists' shops, of which there are too many in the city. It is proper for Government to make enquiries, and take steps for checking the practice.

(6) Some four or five Native physicians should be appointed by Government to look after patients who are habituated to Hindustani treatment. They can be paid out of the municipal funds, or by raising subscriptions.

(7) Corn which has been kept in store for a long time and new corn give birth to diseases, and the use of such should, therefore, be prohibited.

(8) Such disagreeable trades as the making of catgut, the preparation of leathern vessels to hold *ghee*, from the hides of buffaloes, and the like, should not be allowed to be carried on in public streets, but in places remote from habitation, as they give rise to an offensive smell.

(9) The makers of smoking-tobacco should be prohibited from pounding tobacco at their shops by the market-side, as the smell is offensive to the brain of passers-by, and causes coughing.

(10) Measures should be adopted to stop the discharge of canal-water into wells, it being established on fact that it is most unwholesome to drink, and produces various diseases.

COMMERCIAL.

The *Koh-i-Nur*, of the 15th April, in a long article, prefers complaints against the ill-treatment received by Hindustanis at the hands of officers of the Panjab Railway Company. The gist is, that while the comfort and convenience of European passengers is closely studied, Native gentlemen of the highest rank not only suffer much annoyance and trouble, but are often ill-treated by the railway officers. A notorious instance of this has recently been witnessed in the case of Pandit Bakhshi Ram, Civil Surgeon and Director of Public Instruction under the Government of Jammu. The Pandit had to go from Lahore to Delhi with his family, and had secured two

whole compartments of the intermediate-class carriage. When the train reached the Amritsar Station, he, with two of his sons, left the carriage to refresh himself. They returned in time to resume their seats, but the sons had not yet got into the carriage, when the assistant station-master, who was a Native, came and locked the door, and in spite of entreaties and solicitations, prevented them entering, and remained standing on the spot till the train had left the station, in order that no other person might unlock the door and allow them to get in.

The assistant station-master excuses himself from the charge of ill-treatment on the plea that the Pandit's sons failed to take their seats in the carriage before the bell rung, and that, therefore, he thought it his duty to lock the door of the carriage in accordance with the railway rules. The Pandit urges that as he had hired two whole compartments the doors ought not to have been locked, any more than those of the first and second-class carriages in the same train in which European gentlemen were. As the Pandit has lodged a complaint against the assistant station-master before the Agent, Panjáb Railway Company, and, in case of failing to receive justice, intends to appeal to Government, the writer forbears from making any remarks on the case. He, however, sees no reason why Hindustáni gentlemen should be deprived of the indulgence allowed by railway officers to their European brethren; and, in order to avoid a recurrence of the grievance complained of, advises the railway authorities to appoint respectable men at such posts as assistant station-masterships and the like.

The *Panjábí Akhbár*, of the same date, writes that the notices issued by the Punjáb and Delhi Railway Company are not useful for supplying information to the public. They are generally in English, and are hung only at railway stations, in consequence of which their usefulness is very limited. In the writer's opinion, Urdú and Hindí translations of the railway guide and notices should be widely circulated among the common people, and the notices should be fixed at streets and thoroughfares for the information of the public.

The following Vernacular newspapers have been examined in this report, viz.:—

No.	NAME OF NEWSPAPER.	WHERE PUBLISHED.	DATE.		DATE OF RECEIPT.	
			1871.		1871.	
1	<i>Indu Prabhā,</i>	Cawnpore,	February	23rd	April	19th
2	<i>Ditto,</i>	Ditto,	March	2nd	"	19th
3	<i>Ditto,</i>	Ditto,	"	9th	"	19th
4	<i>Ditto,</i>	Ditto,	"	16th	"	19th
5	<i>Ditto,</i>	Ditto,	"	23rd	"	19th
6	<i>Ditto,</i>	Ditto,	"	30th	"	19th
7	<i>Vidyā Vilās,</i>	Jammu,	April	1st	"	20th
8	<i>Mālwa Akhbār,</i>	Indour,	"	5th	"	22nd
9	<i>Rohilkhund Akhbār,</i>	Muradabad,	"	8th	"	18th
10	<i>Gwalior Gazette,</i>	Gwalior,	"	9th	"	17th
11	<i>Saharanpore Gazette,</i>	Saharanpore,	"	10th	"	16th
12	<i>Matla-i-Nūr,</i>	Cawnpore,	"	10th	"	16th
13	<i>Mārwar Gazette,</i>	Jodhpore,	"	10th	"	19th
14	<i>Shola-i-Tūr,</i>	Cawnpore,	"	11th	"	14th
15	<i>Oudh Akhbār,</i>	Lucknow,	"	11th	"	16th
16	<i>Nasīm-i-Jaunpore,</i>	Jounpore,	"	11th	"	19th
17	<i>Akmal-ul-Akhbār,</i>	Delhi,	"	12th	"	18th
18	<i>Benares Akhbār,</i>	Benares,	"	13th	"	16th
19	<i>Akhbār-i-Alam,</i>	Meerut,	"	13th	"	18th
20	<i>Naiyir-i-Akbar,</i>	Bijnour,	"	13th	"	20th
21	<i>Allygurh Institute Gazette,</i>	Allygurh,	"	14th	"	17th
22	<i>Lawrence Gazette,</i>	Meerut,	"	14th	"	18th
23	<i>Rajpūtāna Social Science Congress.</i>	Jaipore,	"	14th	"	19th
24	<i>Nūr-ul-Absār,</i>	Allahabad,	"	15th	"	17th
25	<i>Meerut Gazette,</i>	Meerut,	"	15th	"	18th
26	<i>Panjābī Akhbār,</i>	Lahore,	"	15th	"	18th
27	<i>Koh-i-Nūr,</i>	Ditto,	"	15th	"	18th
28	<i>Urdū Delhi Gazette,</i>	Agra,	"	15th	"	18th
29	<i>Ab-i-Hayāt-i-Hind,</i>	Ditto,	"	15th	"	20th
30	<i>Samaya Vinod,</i>	Nynce Tal,	"	15th	"	20th
31	<i>Almorah Akhbār,</i>	Almorah,	"	15th	"	20th
32	<i>Rohilkhund Akhbār,</i>	Muradabad,	"	15th	"	22nd
33	<i>Khair Khwāh-i-Panjāb</i>	Gujaranwalla,	"	2nd week,	"	20th
34	<i>Urdū Akhbār,</i>	Delhi,	"	16th	"	19th
35	<i>Jalwa-i-Tūr,</i>	Meerut,	"	16th	"	21st
36	<i>Urdū Muir Gazette,</i>	Ditto,	"	16th	"	21st
37	<i>Hindī Muir Gazette,</i>	Ditto,	"	16th	"	21st
38	<i>Dabdaba-i-Sikundari,</i>	Rampore,	"	17th	"	22nd
39	<i>Matla-i-Nūr,</i>	Cawnpore,	"	17th	"	22nd
40	<i>Shola-i-Tūr,</i>	Ditto,	"	18th	"	22nd
41	<i>Benares Akhbār,</i>	Benares,	"	20th	"	22nd

ALLAHABAD:

The 24th April, 1871.

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